

First Year Seminar
History and Culture in the Digital Age
Wheaton College
Fall 2012

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TR 11:00-12:20, Knapton 114
Office hours: F 10:30-12:00
and by appointment

Facebook. iPad. Kindle. Twitter. iPhone. Android. Angry Birds.

Digital devices and applications have become ubiquitous in the cultural experiences of well-to-do people in developed economies, and commentary on their cultural effects has kept pace. We will explore continuities and differences between our own era and those that have gone before, asking such questions as: Can print and e-text co-exist? Is technology gendered? What are the structures behind games? How do we judge veracity on the web? Is there wisdom in the crowd?

The course will follow a seminar format. Students are responsible for reading all materials carefully, for regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class discussion, for completing written assignments in a timely fashion, and for completing all stages of a semester-long research project.

Required Texts:

J. Gleick, *The Information*
J. D'Agata and J. Fingal, *The Lifespan of a Fact*
D. Rushkoff, *Program or Be Programmed*

Evaluation, or How Grades Are Calculated:

Discussion and participation	100 points
Summer assignment	100 points
Response assignments	150 points
Reading summaries	150 points
WCDHP assignments	175 points
Paper on facts	175 points
<u>Research project</u>	<u>300 points</u>
Total	1,150 points

Key to point scale:

1081+ points	A
1035-1080 points	A-
1000-1034 points	B+
966-999 points	B
920-965 points	B-
885-919 points	C+
851-884 points	C
805-850 points	C-
and so forth	

Note: The schedule and due dates represent a plan for the semester and are subject to change as negotiated between the class and the professor.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings:

Week 1

Tues. Aug. 28—Introduction: Haven't We Met Before?
Reread: Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi*, chapters 1, 2, and 11
Lowery, "Where's _why?" in Slate
Your Summer Assignment Part 3
Discussion: Summer Assignment
Handout: Goals of FYS
Instruction: How to Read a Syllabus and What To Do With It
Response Assignment: My Digital Life

Thur. Aug. 30—Digital Experiences
Discussion: My Digital Life
Instruction: Forests and Trees, or How to Read a Book
Reminder: Conscious Reading
Submit: My Digital Life response

The Digital Age in Historical Context

Week 2

Tues. Sept. 4— Information, Code, Data
Read: Gleick, *The Information*, to page 203
Discussion: The Author's Thesis
Instruction: Auditing a Course
Response Assignment: My Reading Life

Thur. Sept. 6— Communication, Information, and Technology
Read: Gleick, *The Information*, to page 268
Discussion: Reading, Content, and Argument
Instruction: Pass/Grade/Fail?
Assignment: Discussion questions for dinner with President Crutcher
Submit: My Reading Life response

► Gallery Opening for exhibitions *Sitelines* and *Andrew Howard: New Work*.

Fri. Sept. 7: ► Course registration ends; last day to get permission for an audit.

Week 3

Tues. Sept. 11—The Confusion
Read: Gleick, *The Information*, to page 354
Discussion: Communication and Community
Instruction: Dinnertime Conversation
Response Assignment: Dinner with the President (Community at Wheaton)

► Dinner with President Crutcher and three other FYSes: Prepare for discussion of Community at Wheaton using questions from handout.

Thur. Sept. 13—(Don't Stop) Making Sense
Read: Gleick, *The Information*, to page 426
Discussion: Our (Digital) Information Age
Instruction: Summarizing a Book: Why and How
Assignment: Summarizing Gleick's *The Information*
Submit: Dinner with the President response

Fri. Sept. 14: ➤ Annual Study Abroad Fair

Week 4

Tues. Sept. 18—First Library Session

Meet in Woolley Electronic Classroom

Instruction: Information Fluency at Wheaton College

Guest Speaker: Humanities Liaison Pete Coco

➤ Sept. 17-18 ROSH HASHANAH (Judaism); begins at sundown, Sept. 17

A note on religious holidays: Students are excused from attending classes on religious holidays. Students remain responsible for course material covered on those days.

Thur. Sept. 20—Second Library Session

Meet in Woolley Electronic Classroom

Instruction: Doing Research at Wheaton College

Guest Speaker: Humanities Liaison Pete Coco

Assignment: Research Project

Submit: Summary of Gleick's *The Information*

Fri. Sept. 21: ➤ Last day to declare a course Pass/Grade/Fail

Doing History Digitally

Week 5

Tues. Sept. 25—The Wheaton College Digital History Project: An Introduction

Read: Schultz and Hollister, "Single-Entry Accounting in Early America" (ER)

Instruction: Mid-Semester

Assignment: Summary of article

Submit: Research Proposal

➤ Sept. 25-26 YOM KIPPUR (Judaism); begins at sundown, Sept. 25

Thur. Sept. 27—Documents from the Wheaton College Archives

Guest Speaker: Wheaton College Archivist and Special Collections Curator Zeph Stickney

Meet in Marion B. Gebbie Archives and Special Collections

Response Assignment: History and Me

Submit: Summary of article

Week 6

Tues. Oct. 2— Transcribing Manuscript Documents

Meet in (Room TBA)

Instruction: Reading 19th-Century Script

In class: Transcribe a Page-Spread from the Laban Morey Wheaton Daybook (pairs)

Assignment: My Semester So Far

Discussion: Reading and Transcribing 19th-Century Script

Submit: History and Me response

Thur. Oct. 4— Marking Up Documents with TEI Elements

Meet in (Room TBA)

Read: A Gentle Introduction to XML, in TEI P5 Guidelines

Instruction: Angle Brackets and Markup

In class: Mark Up Text from Page-Spread (pairs)

Assignment: Gentle Introduction Summary

Submit: My Semester So Far

Week 7

Tues. Oct. 9— NO CLASS MEETING—OCTOBER BREAK

Thur. Oct. 11— Analyzing Historical Data

Read: The History Engine

Discussion: Data and Evidence in Historical Writing

Instruction: The History Engine

Assignment: Draft a History Engine Episode

Submit: Gentle Introduction Summary

Fri. Oct. 12— Submit: History Engine draft (online)

Submit: Research Bibliography

► Mid-semester grades due

► Family Weekend and Homecoming

Week 8

Tues. Oct. 16— Peer Review

Instruction: Peer Review

Discussion: Writing for the History Engine

Assignment: Revise and Submit History Engine Episode

When Is a Fact Not a Fact?

Thur. Oct. 18— What Is History?

Read: **Atlantic article on the historian who fooled Wikipedia**

Discussion: Lying About History

Instruction: Dropping Courses and Making Connections

Assignment: Summary of D'Agata and Findal, *The Lifespan of a Fact*

Submit: Revised History Engine Episode (online)

Fri. Oct. 19— Submit: Annotated Research Bibliography

► Last day to petition to drop a course without record

► Last day to submit a Self-Initiated Connection (SIC) proposal if this course is the last course taken in the Connection. Seniors may not submit an SIC in their final semester.

Week 9

Tues. Oct. 23— What Are Facts and How Important Are They?

Read: D'Agata and Findal, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, entire

Discussion: Fact-checking

Guest discussant: Professor Talitha Espiritu

Instruction: Applying Conscious Reading to Non-Print Media

Assignment: Paper on Facts in the Digital Age

Submit: Summary of D'Agata and Findal, *The Lifespan of a Fact*

Wed. Oct. 24: ► Miriam Lee Tropp Lecture by Neil Foley, 7 p.m. Mary Lyon 211.

Thur. Oct. 25— The Apple Example

Listen: This American Life episodes

Discussion: Compare and Contrast

Instruction: Advising and Advance Enrollment

Submit: Research Abstract

Week 10 ADVISING WEEK

Tues. Oct. 30— No Class Meeting—Work on Paper on Facts in the Digital Age

Thur. Nov. 1— No Class Meeting—Work on Paper on Facts in the Digital Age

► Lecture by Claude Steele, details TBA.

Fri. Nov. 2— Submit Paper on Facts in the Digital Age to Knapton 323 by noon.

Week 11 ADVANCE ENROLLMENT

Tues. Nov. 6— **Apple and Corporate Responsibility**

Listen: NPR on Apple and Work Conditions in Factories

Instruction: Petitions and Academic Standing

Thur. Nov. 8— No Class Meeting—Work on Research Project

Fri. Nov. 9: ► Last day to petition the Committee on Academic Standing to withdraw from a class. If the petition is approved, the course remains on the academic record with a notation of WD (Withdrawn).

Week 12

Mon. Nov. 12: ► Internship Showcase. 1:00-3:00

Tues. Nov. 13—Danger, Will Robinson!

Read: D. Rushkoff, *Program or Be Programmed*, to p. 71

Discussion: Digital Culture According to Rushkoff

Instruction: Presentations

Submit: Preliminary Research Conclusions

Thur. Nov. 15—A Manifesto for Our Time?

Read: D. Rushkoff, *Program or Be Programmed*, to p. 150

Discussion: Responsible Citizenship in the Digital Age

Assignment: Rushkoff summary

Week 13

Tues. Nov. 20—No Class Meeting—Work on Research Project

Submit: Rushkoff summary

Thur. Nov. 22—NO CLASS MEETING—THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14

Tues. Nov. 27—Presentations as assigned

Thur. Nov. 29—Presentations as assigned

Week 15

Tues. Dec. 4— Presentations as assigned

Thur. Dec. 6— We Made It!

Fri. Dec. 7— Submit Research Projects by noon.

► Last day of classes

Dec. 8—9: ► Review Period

Dec. 10—15: ► Exam Period

How to succeed in this course:

- Prepare for class meetings by reading all assigned materials, taking notes, and bringing comments and questions to each class meeting.
- Attend and participate in all class meetings. Missing more than two (2) class meetings will result in reduction of the student's grade for the course.
- Bring a spirit of curiosity to reading and research assignments.
- Learn to understand writing as a process that requires multiple drafts and feedback from peers before submitting formal papers.
 - All writers, at some stage in the writing process, find it worthwhile to consult at least one other individual for guidance and feedback. At Wheaton, writing tutors can help writers brainstorm, organize, focus and develop ideas; assist writers with using sources by helping them to paraphrase, introduce, and cite other writers' ideas; and help writers to learn about punctuation, mechanics and proofreading strategies. Tutors work in the Kollett Center for Collaborative Learning, and their schedules are available through the Kollett Center website:
<http://www.wheatoncollege.edu/Kollett/StudentResources/tutoring.html>
- Observe due dates when submitting assignments.
 - Break down assignments into component steps that can be accomplished a bit at a time.
 - Plan ahead to insure enough time to complete all of the necessary steps.
 - Extensions are available in cases of genuine need. In such cases, prior arrangement is required.
 - Submitting assignments late without prior arrangement will result in reduction of the grade for the assignment.
- Show respect for all members of the class.
 - Turn off and store cell phones, MP3 players, Blackberries, iPhones, iPads, laptops, and other electronic equipment on entering the classroom.
 - Use class meetings for work on this course. Refrain from working on assignments for other courses or reading outside materials—including textbooks for other courses, newspapers, magazines—during class meetings.
- Observe the Wheaton Honor Code.
 - Write and sign a statement of academic integrity on all work submitted for this course.